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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/34 of 9 December 1994, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). 1/

2. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

3. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space considered the question of the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference during their 1995 sessions. Accordingly, the information contained in the present report primarily reflects the result of the work of the Committee, whose report 2/ is also before the General Assembly.

II. WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

4. The Working Group of the Whole was reconvened by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its 1995 session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/34 to continue its work.

5. At its 1995 session, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole as contained in its report (A/AC.105/605, annex II) and recommended that the Working Group be reconvened in 1996 to continue its work.

III. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

6. In paragraph 23 of its resolution 49/34, the General Assembly requested all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to cooperate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. In that connection, the Committee noted with appreciation the participation in all stages of its work and that of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee by representatives of United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and other international organizations.

7. Several United Nations bodies and specialized agencies have extensive space-related programmes that are contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Bank. Details of these programmes can be found in the yearly reports of the Secretary-General on coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. The latest report (A/AC.105/587) contains an overview of the work programmes of United Nations bodies and agencies for 1995 and 1996.

8. The programmes and projects of the organizations of the United Nations system are coordinated at annual inter-agency meetings. The seventeenth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities is scheduled to be held at the United Nations Office at Vienna in October 1995.

IV. STUDIES

9. In response to the requests of the Working Group of the Whole at its eighth session, the Secretariat prepared and submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-second session, in 1995, the following reports and studies: "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/AC.105/567 and Add.1-5 3/ for the activities of Member States, and A/AC.105/601 for the programmes of international organizations); "Global change: participation of developing countries and possibilities of enhancing it" (A/AC.105/590); and "Satellite-based radio broadcasting" (A/AC.105/591).

10. In endorsing the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole at its ninth session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space noted that they called for the preparation of further studies and reports of relevance to the recommendations of the Conference.

11. In addition, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group, the Secretariat will prepare for submission to the Subcommittee at its 1996 session the following reports and studies: reports from Member States and international organizations involved in space activities on their space activities subject to greater international cooperation and on their research on space debris, particularly on practices that have been adopted and that have proven effective in minimizing the creation of space debris, as well as reports from Member States containing information on their national and cooperative international space activities, on their resources and technological capabilities in the fields of space activities for the promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, on safety of orbiting space objects with nuclear power sources (NPS) and on the collision of orbiting space objects with NPS on board with space debris. The Secretariat will also prepare technical studies on space applications for sustainable development; developing tele-education programmes through international cooperation; basic space science in developing countries; use of remote sensing technologies for environmental applications, particularly in support of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; small microsatellites: current projects and future perspectives for international cooperation; and global exchange of scientific and technical information: networking possibilities for developing countries.

V. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS

12. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Conference that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be directed towards seven specific objectives. The activities conducted in 1994 by the Programme and the plans for the period 1995-1996 to meet those objectives are contained in the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/595).

A. Training courses/workshops/conferences/symposia

13. Part of the activities carried out or planned under the Programme in 1995, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and Governments of Member States, include the following training courses, seminars and workshops: the United Nations Meeting of Experts on the Development of Education Curricula for the Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, organized in cooperation with the Universidad de Granada; the Fifth United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators, organized in cooperation with the Government of Sweden; the United Nations/European Space Agency (ESA) Training Course on the Use of European Remote Sensing Satellite (ERS-1) Data for Mapping and Inventory of Natural Resources in Africa, organized in cooperation with the Government of Gabon for the benefit of French-speaking African countries; the United Nations/ESA Workshop on the Applications of Space Techniques to Prevent and Combat Disasters, organized in cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe for the benefit of English-speaking African countries; the United Nations/ Austria/ESA Workshop on Space Technology for Improving Life on Earth, organized in cooperation with the Government of Austria, the Province of Styria, the City of Graz and ESA; the Untied Nations/International Astronautical Federation (IAF)/ESA/Commission of the European Communities (CEC) Workshop on Space Technology for Health Care and Environmental Monitoring for the Developing World, organized in cooperation with the Government of Norway, ESA, IAF and CEC; the United Nations Regional Conference on Space Technology for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized in cooperation with the Government of Mexico and ESA; the Fifth United Nations/ESA Workshop on Basic Space Science, organized in cooperation with the Government of Pakistan and ESA for the benefit of Member States in the Asia and the Pacific region; the United Nations/ESA Training Course for Asian and Pacific Countries on the Monitoring of Natural Resources, Renewable Energy and Environment using the ERS Satellites, organized in cooperation with ESA; the United Nations/International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) Workshop on Optics in Space Science and Technology, organized in cooperation with ICTP; and the United Nations Workshop on the Use of Space Techniques for the Monitoring and Control of the Desert Environment, organized in cooperation with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for the benefit of Member States in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

14. In 1996, the following training courses, seminars, conferences and workshops are planned:

(a) The Sixth United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators, to be hosted and co-sponsored by the Government of Sweden;

(b) The Second United Nations Regional Conference on Space Technology for Sustainable Development in Africa;

(c) The Sixth United Nations/ESA Workshop on Basic Space Science;

(d) The United Nations/United States of America International Workshop on Spin-off Benefits of Space Technology: Challenges and Opportunities;

(e) The United Nations/ESA International Training Course on Microwave Remote Sensing;

(f) The United Nations/Spain International Conference on the Development and Design of Experimental Payloads on Small Satellites;

(g) The Second United Nations/ESA Workshop on Radar Remote Sensing Applications;

(h) The United Nations/IAF Symposium on Space Technology in Developing Countries during the forty-seventh Congress of IAF.

B. Development of indigenous capability

15. In accordance with the recommendation of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concerning the development of indigenous capabilities, General Assembly resolution 45/72 of 11 December 1990, in which the Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the United Nations should lead, with the active support of its specialized agencies and other international organizations, an international effort to establish regional centres for space science and technology in existing national/regional educational institutions in the developing countries, and resolution 49/34, in which the Assembly once again considered it particularly urgent that the United Nations should support the creation of adequate training centres at the regional level, the Secretariat has continued its efforts, undertaken as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and has made much progress in establishing such centres. The Secretariat has provided updated information on its activities concerning the regional centres in the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/595) and has also reported to the Committee on the latest status of this initiative. In addition, it is continuing consultations with the regional commissions and the countries that have expressed interest in hosting such centres, as well as its discussions with Member States, UNDP and other regional and international funding institutions on the question of the funding for the establishment of these centres.

16. In the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the analysis of the report of the evaluation mission to the countries whose Governments had offered to host the regional centre, Brazil and Mexico had been selected by the

United Nations. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Brazil and Mexico had reaffirmed their commitment to establish the centre. Discussions are ongoing with the Office for Outer Space Affairs to expedite the process.

17. In the Asia and the Pacific region, the report of a similar evaluation mission to the region had been prepared, and as a result of the analysis of the report, India was selected to host the regional centre. The Committee noted that India had circulated the draft agreement to all Member States of the region for their review and comments. Arrangements are being made for the signing of this agreement. The Committee welcomed China's offer to become the next major node of that centre and noted that negotiations towards that end were ongoing. The Committee also welcomed the offer by the Islamic Republic of Iran, following the favourable results of the evaluation mission, to establish another major node of the centre.

18. Regarding the regions of Africa and the Middle East, the evaluation missions to both regions have been conducted, and the reports of those missions are currently under review. Arrangements are under discussion between the Governments of the countries concerned and the United Nations. In the case of Europe, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece and Romania have offered to host the centre.

19. For all regional centres for space science and technology education, a model curriculum is currently being developed in order to provide each centre with a benchmark of the academic level necessary for international recognition. The initial work on that model curriculum was conducted at the United Nations Meeting of Experts on the Development of Education Curricula, which was organized and hosted by the Government of Spain and held at Granada, Spain, in February and March of this year (see para. 13 above). The model curriculum that emanated from that Meeting is currently undergoing peer review and will be finalized by the end of 1995.

C. Technical advisory services

20. In paragraph 7 (g) of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly decided that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should, upon request by Member States or any of the specialized agencies, be directed towards the provision or arrangements for provision of technical advisory services on space applications projects. With regard to that mandate, the Programme has provided or is providing assistance in the following areas:

(a) In collaboration with ESA, in identifying and implementing support mechanisms to enable scientists from Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean to receive and utilize data from the European Remote Sensing Satellite of ESA;

(b) To the Government of Ecuador, in promoting regional cooperation, administration and funding of the ground receiving station at Cotopaxi, Ecuador;

(c) To the Government of Chile, in its follow-up, as pro tempore secretariat, of the recommendations of the Second Space Conference of the Americas;

(d) To the Government of the Republic of Korea, in the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Council (see para. 23 below);

(e) To the Government of Sri Lanka in establishing an astronomical observatory;

(f) To the region of Africa in implementing the project entitled "Cooperative Information Network Linking Scientists and Professionals in Africa (COPINE)", which would establish an information network linking 10 institutions in Africa and 5 universities in Europe;

(g) To the Organization for Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) in the use of remote sensing for monitoring and management of coastal resources including the preparation of a project proposal for submission to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

D. Long-term fellowships

21. In promoting the development of indigenous capability, the Programme will award 17 long-term fellowships for the in-depth training of individuals from developing countries in the areas of research and applications in remote sensing technology; research and training in geodesy, photogrammetry and remote sensing; space antennas and propagation; communications systems; remote sensing information systems; satellite meteorology; and remote sensing instrumentation. The following have renewed their offers of fellowships for the 1994-1995 period: the Governments of Brazil (10), China (2) and ESA (5).

E. Regional mechanisms of cooperation

22. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/34, the Secretariat continued its efforts to strengthen the regional mechanisms of cooperation in carrying out various activities in the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in particular those relating to the Programme on Space Applications.

23. The efforts of the Programme made through its advisory service to the Government of the Republic of Korea resulted in the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Council. The Council will serve as a regional forum to promote exchanges of information and cooperation in the field of satellite communications and broadcasting, which would facilitate the expansion of regional cooperation.

24. The establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education, the primary goal of which is to enhance the academic and professional capabilities as well as the technical infrastructure in space science and technology in the institutions in developing countries in each region, is also viewed as being very much a part of the Secretariat's effort to strengthen mechanisms of regional cooperation. For the region of Asia and the Pacific, the Secretariat participated in the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for

Development in the ESCAP Region, which was held at Beijing, China, in September 1994, and provided participants with information on the establishment of such a centre. The Conference established the Strategy for Regional Cooperation in Space Applications for Sustainable Development and the Action Plan on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (see paras. 15-19 above).

VI. INTERNATIONAL SPACE INFORMATION SERVICE

25. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly decided to establish an International Space Information Service, consisting initially of a directory of sources of information and data services to provide direction, upon request, to accessible data banks and information sources.

26. With regard to that mandate, the International Space Information Service published Highlights in Space (A/AC.105/583), based on annual reports prepared by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and IAF, including a submission by the International Institute of Space Law (IISL); and the sixth volume of Seminars of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (A/AC.105/584), containing selected papers from the seminars, workshops and training courses of the Programme in 1994.

27. Progress has been made to augment the International Space Information Service through the development of a limited database capability and the creation of a "home page" on the INTERNET through which a wide range of information regarding the space-related activities of the United Nations, particularly those of the Committee and the Programme on Space Applications, can be accessed. The Office for Outer Space Affairs is cooperating with the German Space Agency (DARA) in the preparation of a study on the feasibility of establishing a computer-based International Space Information Service.

VII. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

28. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly appealed to all Governments to make voluntary contributions, either in money or in kind, towards carrying out the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In a note verbale dated 11 March 1983, the Secretary-General brought that paragraph to the attention of Member States, particularly with respect to the newly mandated and expanded activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Member States and intergovernmental organizations which have responded to this appeal since the forty-ninth session of the Assembly have been mentioned under appropriate headings in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. 2/

29. Following the recommendation by the Committee in 1993 to the General Assembly that it increase the budget allocation for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications so that the Programme would be able to implement more fully the recommendations of the Conference, the Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, had approved an additional budget allocation for the Programme for the biennium 1994-1995. However, the Committee, at its 1995 session, took note of

the disappointment expressed by representatives of developing countries at the lack of financial resources available to implement fully the recommendations of the Conference.

VIII. THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

30. In paragraph 26 of its resolution 49/34, the General Assembly agreed that a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (the third UNISPACE conference) could be convened in the near future and that, prior to recommending a date for the conference, there should be a consensus recommendation on the agenda, venue and funding of the conference. The Assembly also recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee conduct a thorough analysis and define an agenda for such a conference and agreed that the Subcommittee should discuss a broad range of themes and subjects that could be refined into a sharply focused and detailed agenda and should also continue its examination of other means of achieving the goals set for such a conference.

31. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation that following a request of the Committee at its session in 1994, the Secretariat had compiled, in time for consideration by the Subcommittee, a document that contained the various ideas regarding the agenda and organization of the third UNISPACE conference (A/AC.105/575/Add.1). In carrying out the above tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the Subcommittee considered, through its Working Group of the Whole, the objectives and organization of the conference, other means to achieve the goals set for the conference, as well as other ideas, including a possible agenda and financial aspects of the conference. In adopting the report, the Subcommittee agreed that the report of the Working Group of the Whole (see A/AC.105/605, annex II, paras. 13-59, and appendix) should provide the basis for continued discussions by the Committee on a recommendation to the General Assembly, as envisaged in resolution 49/34.

32. The Committee considered the matter and agreed that a third UNISPACE conference could be held before the turn of the present century. The Committee also agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should be requested to continue the work that it had undertaken in 1995 with its aim being to complete the development and refinement of a framework which would allow an evaluation of proposals by the Committee in 1996. The Committee agreed that the framework should allow for the consideration of all possibilities of achieving the final objectives. The framework must allow for the objectives to be considered in order to define a detailed agenda that can be proposed to the Committee and take into account that the range of financial issues and the scope of the conference are essential matters.

33. The Committee agreed that on the basis of the report of the next session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Committee, at its 1996 session, should consider all issues regarding the possible holding of a third UNISPACE conference, including its technical and political objectives, a detailed and sharply focused agenda, funding, timing and organizational aspects. The Committee would also consider whether or not the objectives of the conference

could be achieved through other means, with a view to making a final decision on the matter at the 1996 session.

Notes

1/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/50/20).

3/ A/AC.105/592/Add.6 was issued after the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee.